

Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls

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The cosmology inherent in the Dead Sea Scrolls features a heavenly realm populated by divine beings. In imagery drawn from the temple and the royal court, the angels in the Scrolls are commonly portrayed as God's faithful servants who continuously perform his service, praising him. Yet, although heaven is their home, angels also enter the human sphere and play a great role in the life of the Qumran community. Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls appear in various contexts and reflect well developed speculations that go far beyond traditional biblical understanding of angels: in vivid language the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4QShirShabb) meditate on the continuous worship of angels in a heavenly temple; the War Scroll (1QM) anticipates an end time war when a celestial host will annihilate all the evil forces, both human and demonic; a leader figure in Hodayot (1QH) claims to have joined the 'sons of heaven'; in the Community Rule (1QS) the Sons of Light are governed by an archangel, the Prince of Light. Furthermore, Josephus claims that the Essenes kept the names of the angels secret (*J.W.* 2.142), and if the Essenes are associated with the Dead Sea community, then this claim also demonstrates the general interest in angels.

The following survey will examine various aspects of belief associated with angels in the literature from Qumran, noticing differences and similarities. Many documents share similar ideas and display a fascination with angels. Still, harmonization of the various beliefs into a systematic angelology is not possible, given the diverse nature of the documents and the uncertainties about their provenance. We will begin with an introduction to angelic terminology, followed by an examination of the nature and functions of angels, their union with community members, as well as expectations concerning their role in the end times. This survey will also consider the relationship between angels and their evil counterparts, the demons, who are a powerful force in the conceptual universe reflected in the Scrolls. Our study will be limited to sectarian documents from Qumran (those documents that are believed to be composed by the sect), as well as those non-sectarian documents used by the sect that are not well-known from elsewhere (i.e., excluding the Pseudepigrapha). Thus, although documents like 1En and Jubilees

were highly regarded by the sect, they will only be noted briefly for comparative reasons and as sources of inspiration.

1. Terminology

There are a wide range of angelic designations in the Dead Sea Scrolls that testify to a rich tradition concerning angels.¹ The most frequently used term for angels is the common biblical term **מֶלֶךְ** (lit. “messenger”). The biblical term “host, army,” **צָבָא** also appears in the Scrolls (“host of the holy ones” 1QH^a 11:22, 35), as well as new designations for angels, such as “glorious ones” and “the elect of heaven” (1QM 12:5). With the rising interest in angels and the heavenly world in Second Temple Judaism it became common place to identify all terms for divine beings in the Hebrew Bible, some of which originally had polytheistic connotations, with angels, such “sons of God” (Gen 6:2,4; Job 1:6) and “holy ones” קָדוֹשִׁים. At Qumran there is, however, a preference for the non-biblical expression “sons of heavens” בְּנֵי שָׁמַיִם over “sons of God” (e.g., 1QS 4:22; 11:8; 1QH^a 11:22). Whereas the expression בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים is not found in the sectarian literature, (Ps 29:1) and the non-biblical בְּנֵי אֵל are used a few times.² As Florentino García Martínez points out, these metaphorical expressions emphasize the divine nature of the angels rather than a father-son relationship with God. Furthermore, divine titles in the Hebrew Bible and combinations with “el” become prominent angelic titles. “אלים” “gods” are common names for angels in the Scrolls (1QM 14:15), which also articulate the divine nature of these beings. The term אלוהים is particularly popular in the Sabbath Songs, making it hard at times to distinguish between references to “God” and “angels.”³ Angelic epithets with אלים include אֱלֹהִים אֹור “gods of light” (4QShirShabb^d [4Q403] 1 ii 35) and אֱלֹהִים דָעַת “gods of knowledge” (4Q403 1 i 31). The functions of the angels are highlighted in some of the terms, as in the biblical terms מְשֻׁרְתִּים “ministers” (Ps 103:21), כְהִנִּים “priests,” שָׁר “prince” (Prince of Lights in 1QS 3:20; 1QM 13:10 “cf. Dan 10:21; 12:1), and נְשִׁים “prince” (Prince of Holiness, 4QShirShabb^b [4Q401] 23).⁴ “Angels of presence” מֶלֶאֲכִי פָנִים (1QH^a 14:13; 1QSb 4:25-26 in the singular) refers to angels serving in the

1 For an overview of angelological terminology in relation to the Sabbath Songs, see Newsom, Songs (1985) 23-38.

2 See García Martínez, Sonship 111-112.

3 Newsom, Songs (1985) 24.

4 The designation נְשִׁיאִים in the plural occurs frequently in the Sabbath Songs, e.g., 4Q400 3 ii 2.

innermost sanctuary, in God's presence (cf Jub 1:27-2:1). Like many other titles, this epithet stems from biblical exegesis.⁵ Other angelic titles are "chiefs," רָאשִׁים which can imply political, military and priestly functions. The heavenly entities the cherubim, כְּרוּבִים, appear in poetry such as the Sabbath Songs and Berakoth (4Q405 20 ii 21-22 3; 4Q286 1a ii b 2).⁶ In the Sabbath Songs we also find one of the most frequent angelic designations in the Scrolls, רוח, "spirit," which is a development of the biblical usage (Num 16:22; Ps 104:4; cf. "God of the Spirits" Num 27:16).⁷ At the same time, רוח preserves a range of meanings from the Hebrew Bible, including the meaning human spirit, and is used in combinations with various attributes, such as "spirits of knowledge" (4QShirShabbf [4Q405] 17 3) and "spirits of truth" (1QM 13:10) The multiple meaning is apparent in a passage like 1QH^a 11: 21-23 where "spirit" is used both with reference to humans and angels. Similarly, a biblical designation for angelic beings, "holy ones," has a dual meaning and is used to connote both humans and angels as a play on words in 1QM (10:10-12) and in 1QH^a (19:9-12).⁸

The heightened interest in angels at Qumran was part of a general apocalyptic worldview in which angels and the heavenly world typically formed key elements. To such a worldview also belongs the sharp dualistic outlook of the world that divides both humankind and supernatural beings into good and evil. Accordingly, many of the scrolls include references to evil spirits. Parallel to the heavenly beings, the evil entities are frequently called רוחות "spirits" (1QM 13:2; Songs of the Sage^b [4Q511] 1 6), as well as מלאכים "angels" ("angels of destruction" 1QM 13:12). The term "spirits of the bastard" (4Q510 1 5; 4Q511 35 7) alludes to the Enochic traditions about their origin from the unnatural, sexual union of angels and women in Gen 6:1-4 (1En 15:8-12).⁹ The commander of the evil forces is Belial, who, like his good, angelic counterpart is also called שָׁרֵך, "Prince" ("the Prince of the realm of wickedness" 1QM 17:5-6); in 1QS he is known as the Angel of Darkness (3:20-21) and the Spirit of Deceit (4:9). His evil lot is also called "sons of Belial" (4Q286 7 a ii b-d 6).

5 Olyan, *Thousands* 108.

6 Although Ezekiel is an important source of inspiration in the depiction of the angelic beings, the term חיה, "living creatures," in Ezekiel 1 and 10^c is not found in the Sabbath Songs. It is likely that the term ophannim, אַיִלָנִים (the "wheels" that Ezekiel saw) has developed into a proper noun for an angelic class in the Sabbath Songs, although this remains debated; see Olyan, *Thousands* 34-42.

7 Olyan, *Thousands* 25. Also, in 1Kgs 22:21-22 the prophet Micaiah recounts how a "spirit" in God's court offers to be a "lying spirit" to the prophets.

8 See Mach, *Angels* 25; García Martínez, *Sonship* 115-116; Davila, *Melchizedek*.

9 Cf. Jub 10:10-13.

2. Nature and Functions of Angels

2.1. Nature and Images of Angels

Angels are supernatural entities who capture qualities from both the divine and human spheres. Like humans they are created by God, but unlike humans they are eternal (רְוחֹת עָלִם, “eternal spirits,” 1QH^a 9:11) and can move between the heavenly and earthly realms. Perfectly obedient, the angels observe all the commandments (4Q405 23 i 10-12), but their knowledge is limited compared to God’s (11Q5 [11QPs^a] 26:12), and they cannot fully recount God’s wonders (1QH^a 20:29-30).¹⁰

There are no detailed descriptions of the appearance of angels in the Scrolls like that we find in Dan 10. The closest we come in this regard are the depictions of the priestly angels in the Sabbath Songs who are clothed in priestly, intricately embroidered robes in many colors and enveloped in light (4Q405 23 ii 7-9). This suggests angels are human-like in appearance. In these songs they move about fast and there are references to their wings (4Q405 20 ii 21-22 8). Nevertheless, these depictions of angels are deliberately vague, as we will see below. Though the dominant picture of angels is that of obedient, spiritual beings (חָרָק), extra-canonical elaborations of the popular myth of the fallen angels (Gen 6:1-4), that are presumed in some sectarian documents from Qumran (CD [the Damascus Document] 2:17-20), suggest that they can sin and that they can possess a physical body.

Like the Genesis myth, the angels in the literature from Qumran do not appear to be sexless. Instead, all the extant names of angels are male. The two most prominent roles of angels in the Scrolls are that of priests serving in the temple and as military forces, both which identify them as male. It is noteworthy in this context that Jubilees claims that the angels were created circumcised (Jub 15:27-28), obviously in the form of human males. In short, there are no hints of female angels in the Qumran library. When it comes to demons, however, there is evidence of female entities. A demon named Lilith appears in the Songs of the Sage (4Q510 1 5) and the non-sectarian composition 4QExorcism ar (4Q560 1 i 2-6) refers to male and female evil spirits in pairs. In addition, the non-sectarian 4Q184, 4QWiles of the Wicked Woman, may well concern a female demon.¹¹ In sum, the Scrolls cosmology reflects a

¹⁰ According to reconstruction in Weinfeld, Song 154, 1QH^a 20:29-30 reads: “and the wondrous mighty ones, they cannot recount Your full glory.”

¹¹ See Baumgarten, *Nature*.

dichotomy of two supernatural spheres in which the good forces appears to be all-male, whereas the evil forces are mixed gender. This imbalance is indicative of the androcentric perspective in general that permeates much of the literature from Qumran and elsewhere in the Jewish world. In such milieu questions about female angels were likely never raised.¹²

2.2. Chief Angels

In the tradition of Dan 7 ("a thousand thousands..." 7:10; cf. Ps 68:17) the angelic beings are often seen as an innumerable celestial entourage of God. Nevertheless, a hierarchy and division among the angels are often presumed in the Qumran texts, as is the case of the worshipping angels in the Sabbath Songs (see below). Following the general speculations about angels in late Second Temple Judaism in general, archangels emerge in the Scrolls, some of whom are named (cf. the names of Michael and Gabriel in Daniel). In the Sabbath Songs there are seven principal angels, with Melchizedek (see below) likely being the highest one, each presiding over an angelic priesthood.¹³ According to 1QM there are instead four principal angels: Gabriel, Sariel, Raphael, and Michael (9:15-16). A related motif is the superiority of one chief angel, who, as in the example of the Son of Man (possibly Michael) in Dan 7, is second in command after God. This principal figure is often called "prince" and is constructed as the opposing principal force against an evil counterpart. Michael is the supreme angel in 1QM (1QM 9:14-16; 17:6-7) and is likely the identity also of the Prince of Light in 1QM 13:10.¹⁴ The fragmentary manuscripts of the exorcistic psalms 11QApocryphal Psalms^a, whose identity as sectarian or not is debated, include a reference to Raphael (reconstructed in 11Q11 5:2). The dualistic discourse on the two spirits in 1QS 3:13-4: 26 divides humanity into two lots ruled by the Prince of Light and the Angel of Darkness respectively: "In the hand of the Prince of Light is the dominion of all the Sons of Righteousness; in the ways of light they walked. But in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is the dominion of the Sons of Deceit; and in the

12 The exception to this male dominance in heaven is the wisdom of God which sometimes appears personified as a female figure (see White Crawford, Lady); Lady Wisdom does not appear to be associated with angels.

13 Newsom restores the name Melchizedek in 4Q401 11 3 as the name of the angelic high priest and suggests restoring this name as one possibility also in 4Q401 22 3 (Songs [1985] 133-134, 143-144).

14 Michael also appears in the war text 4Q285 (4QSefer ha-Milhamah) 13.

ways of darkness they walk" (3:20-21).¹⁵ The Angel of Darkness is also the ruler over evil spirits who attempt to corrupt the Sons of Light while the latter are being helped by the Angel of Truth (3:24-25). There is thus an ongoing battle over humanity directed by these two principal angels of light and darkness that will end with the destruction of the evil camp. The powerful role of these two primary angelic beings is diminished later in the discourse when God at his visitation appears as the primary actor, using various spirits to purify the humans (1QS 4:20-21). The ultimate supremacy of God is thereby never threatened.

The same dualistic worldview and interest in the principal supernatural leaders is found in the pre-Qumranic Aramaic 4QVisions of Amram^{a-f} ar (4Q543-548). This fragmentary document originally likely contained three names for the principal angels of light and darkness. Only one name is preserved in the fragmentary text, namely Melchire-sha ("king of wickedness"; 4Q544 2 13) whose counterpart would presumably be Melchizedek ("king of righteousness"), a figure known in several documents as an important angel and the heavenly prince.¹⁶ The development of this angel is inspired from the legend that mentions the priest-king of Salem by this name in Gen 14:18 in combination with the reference to him in the royal Psalm 110: "you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4). 11QMelchizedek (11Q13), likely a sectarian work, presents Melchizedek as a heavenly high priest, a ruler over the "lot of light," which includes both humans and angels; he thereby takes on a similar role as the Prince of Lights in 1QS. He will execute judgment at the end times (including judgment over "the holy ones"), when he with the aid of angels ("gods [of justice]") will destroy Belial and his evil lot. His role as a judge is supported by biblical citations by which references to God ("el" and "elohim") in Ps 82:1 and 7:7-8 are applied to Melchizedek.¹⁷ His power is thus extensive which has led to speculations of his precise identity as a divine being, or a god. Nevertheless, John Collins observes, "there are, at least, two divine powers in heaven, even if one of them is clearly subordinate to the other."¹⁸ Although his precise nature is debated, his characteristics as a heavenly being and priestly figure fit well with the common angelology of the Scrolls.

15 Translation by Charlesworth / Qimron, Rule.

16 Puech, Croyance 536.

17 He may also be called "your God" תְּהִלָּתֶךָ according to the proposed reconstruction (11Q13 2: 24-25). For a discussion about the identity of Melchizedek, see Steudel, Melchizedek, and Collins, Powers 18-19.

18 Collins, Powers 19.

In this context, it is also worth noticing that the two opposing chief angels in the discourse on the two spirits in 1QS, remain unnamed. Elsewhere in 1QS (1:18; 2:19) and in Qumran literature in general Belial is the common name of the ruler of darkness, frequently used for example, in the Damascus Document (CD 4:12; 5:18-19), 1QM (14:9-10) and the Hodayot (1QH^a 12:13). In the Damascus Document is also found a reference to the “angel Mastemah” (CD 16:5), well known from Jubilees.¹⁹ The term “hatred” (*mastemah*) is associated with Belial in the War Scroll, but not used as a proper name.²⁰ Belial, together with his evil lot of spirits and humans, is subject to curses in several documents that belong to the annual renewal of the covenant ceremony: 1QS includes blessings to the men “of God’s lot” (1QS 2:1-4) and curses to Belial’s lot (1QS 2:4-9; cf. 1QM 13:2-6). Fragments of Berakhot preserve curses directed against Belial – here also called “Angel of the Pit” and “Spirit of Abaddon” – and his spirits (4Q286 7 a ii b-d). 4QCurses (4Q280) contains curses against Melkiresha and his followers (4Q280 2:2-7).

2.3. Angels as Priests

A popular image is that of angelic priests serving in a heavenly temple, praising God, a theme that dominates the Sabbath Songs. The Sabbath Songs are a collection of thirteen hymns composed as a liturgical cycle for the Sabbaths of the first quarter of the solar year.²¹ This composition is also called the Angelic Liturgy, which explains its character as a description of the celestial worship.²² Each song is introduced by a heading that states to which particular Sabbath it belongs, e.g., “For the Sage. Song of the sacrifice of the seventh Sabbath on the sixteenth of the month” (4Q403 1 i 30). Comprising calls to praise and descriptions of the angelic praise as well as the heavenly sanctuaries, the Songs never provide the actual words of prayer spoken by the angels. Yet they are written to be recited by the community.²³ In sublime, rhythmic language, using strange syntax, the songs evoke the transcendent, celestial world and allow the worshippers, the chanters, to participate in the

¹⁹ It may not be a coincidence that the reference to the book of Jubilees is mentioned in the same context (CD 16:2-4).

²⁰ Yadin, Scroll 233. The name Satan, שָׁטָן, appears in 11QPs^a (11Q5) 19:15 (cf. as general adversary in 1QH^a 4 6).

²¹ Newsom, Liturgy 3-4.

²² This title was coined by Strugnell, Liturgy.

²³ Nitzan, Qumran 285, 292-293.

angelic praise. Possibly, the mysterious, poetic language is meant to imitate the secret language of angels.²⁴ The following excerpt from the seventh song (4Q403 1 i 30b-33a) illustrates the genre:

Praise the God of the exalted heights, O you exalted ones among all the gods of knowledge. Let the holiest of the god-like beings magnify the King of glory who sanctifies by His holiness all His holy ones. O you chiefs of the praises of all the god-like beings, praise the majestically [pr]aiseworthy God. For in the splendour of praise is the glory of his kingship. In it is the praise of all the god-like beings together with the splendour of all [His] king[liness].²⁵

Following a description of the temple in the climactic seventh song, the last five songs move the focus gradually from the outer chamber to the innermost sanctuary, the holy of holies. This vivid yet elusive presentation of the temple is influenced particularly by Ezekiel 40-48.²⁶ A unique feature is the depiction of engraved angels inside the temple that, together with other architectural elements, participate in the praise and are thus seen as being alive (e.g., 4Q405 19 a-d).²⁷ The whole temple building appears to be spiritual.²⁸ Drawing heavily on imagery and concepts from Ezekiel 1 and 10, the twelfth song elaborates on the throne chariot and the heavenly beings surrounding it, including the wheels (*ophannim*) that are seen as a division of angels. Even the *merkabah* chariot(s) is animate and takes part in the praise, as the following line (4Q403 1 ii 15) expresses: "and the chariots of His inner shrine give praise together, and their *cherubim* and thei[r] *ophannim* bless wondrously." In a sense, the *merkabah* appears to be made up by angels, which is a prominent feature in later Jewish mystical Hekhalot literature.²⁹ References to the temple that change between the singular and the plural evoke complex, ambiguous images of a sevenfold temple, or seven heavenly sanctuaries, with several *merkabot*, throne chariots.³⁰ The deliberately imprecise and fuzzy images convey the impression that the heavenly realm is mysterious and awesome, and can never be precisely defined.

24 Elior, Temples 169.

25 All the translations are from Parry / Tov (ed.) Dead Sea, unless otherwise stated.

26 Newsom, Songs (1985) 53.

27 Cf. Rev 9:13 where the horns of the altar speak.

28 Alexander, Texts 54.

29 Alexander, Texts 54. The plurality of *markabot* is another similarity between the Sabbath Songs and the later Jewish mystical Hekhalot literature (Newsom, Songs [1985] 237).

30 According to Newsom this "elusive and numinous" description presents the heavenly temple as both one and seven (Newsom, Songs [1985] 51).

Angelic hierarchies are implied throughout the Sabbath Songs. There is a sevenfold hierarchical division of the angels corresponding to the seven levels of sanctuaries, complete with seven priesthoods (4Q405 7 7), seven “chief princes” רְאֵשׁי נֶשֶׁר (4Q403 1 i 23), and deputy princes (נֶשֶׁר מָשִׁנָּה; 4Q400 3-5 ii 2).³¹ There is also a distinction between those angels who serve in the holy of holies and the rest of the priestly angels. In the same way as Israel is divided into twelve tribes, the collectivity of angels appears to be divided according to the perfect number seven, into seven groups.³² The last song, and the climax of the composition, describes the splendid appearance of the angels and their sacrifices. Although regular cultic terms for sacrifices and offerings are used, the sacrifices offered are of spiritual nature, consisting of blessings and praises.³³ Through their service the angels make atonement for those who turn from transgressions (4Q400 1 i 16).

There has been much debate about the function of these songs. Though scholars have been reluctant to identify these texts as testifying to mystical practices of the sect, Philip Alexander unequivocally states “the temple is not merely an object of intellectual speculation or literary curiosity: it constitutes a divine, transcendent realm that is seen as the goal of mystical aspiration.”³⁴ Along similar lines, Carol Newsom describes the Sabbath Songs as providing the means “by which those who read and heard it could receive not merely communion with angels but a virtual experience of presence in the heavenly temple among the angelic priests.”³⁵ The Songs may thus be seen as reflecting mystical practices that induced the experience for the participants of transcending the human realm and being united with the angels in worship.³⁶ It is tempting to understand these meditations on the celestial worship in light of the sect’s rejection of the actual temple service in Jerusalem as corrupt.³⁷ In comparison, 1QS 8:5-6, with polemical overtones, identifies the community as the true temple, “a House of Holiness for Israel, an

31 For the hierarchy among angels and a comparison with the elite angelic classes in Jubilees, see Newsom, Songs (1985) 32-36. Deputy angels occur in analogy to deputy priests in 2Kgs 23:4 (Newsom, Songs [1985] 32).

32 Newsom, Songs (1985) 31.

33 Newsom, Songs (1985) 42.

34 Alexander, Texts 10.

35 Newsom, Songs (2000) 889.

36 An alternative interpretation is offered by Fletcher-Louis, Glory, who argues that the Sabbath Songs reflect an angelomorphism, i.e., they concern humans who are seen as angels. For a critique of his views, see Alexander, Texts 45-47.

37 Newsom, Songs (2000) 888 explains that “the text readily may be understood as a means of enhancing the sense of priestly identity through its vivid description of the Israelite priesthood’s angelic counterparts.”

assembly of supreme Holiness for Aaron.” Through these mystical texts the participants could enter into the heavenly sphere, far beyond what they could possibly hope to experience by officiating in the Jerusalem temple.

Although distinct vocabulary point to a non-Qumranic provenance, with nine copies discovered at Qumran (and one at Masada) it is clear that the Sabbath Songs held an important place in the Qumran community. The sectarian composition Berakot (4Q286-290) exhibits influence from the Sabbath Songs, thereby testifying to the importance of the Songs. We find in Berakot^a (4Q286) a similar numinous language as in the Sabbath Songs with a focus on the heavenly temple and the angelic worship, though it is also concerned with God’s earthly creation that takes part in the praise (4Q286 5 a-c). In these hymns, there is thus an attempt to connect the celestial and terrestrial spheres not only through united human and angelic worship, but also to include the whole cosmos as subject to the authority of the angels (4Q286 3 a-d).

The liturgical document Blessings (1QSb) comprises elaborations of the traditional priestly blessing in Num 6:24-26 and has an eschatological character.³⁸ The blessing of the high priest in 1QSb 4:24-26 compares him to an Angel of Presence:³⁹

May you be as an Angel of Presence in the Abode of Holiness to the glory of the God of [hosts]. May you attend upon the service in the Temple of the Kingdom and decree destiny in company with the Angels of the Presence, in common council [with the Holy Ones] for everlasting ages and time without end.

Whether or not these blessings should be understood as expressions of realized or future eschatology, they give further evidence of the close bond between humans and angels within the context of the worship.

2.4. Angels as Warriors

Corresponding to the wide-spread apocalyptic expectations of the time, Qumran literature takes for granted that the present time constituted

³⁸ Alexander, Redaction-History 444, explains that 1QSb “is not the current liturgy of the sect, but part of a special order of service to be enacted at the inauguration of the eschaton.” Still, as Charlesworth / Qimron, Rule 2 n.9, argues, since the sect believed it was living at the end times the blessings may have been recited in anticipation of the eschaton.

³⁹ Translation by Vermes, Dead Sea. The official editor, Milik, presumed that the blessing was part of that for the Zadokite priests in the previous column. Charlesworth / Qimron accepts this interpretation (Blessings 120). For the view that the blessing concerns the high priest, see Fletcher-Louis, Glory 151-158.

the end times, a period dominated by the forces of evil.⁴⁰ The sect was looking forward to the imminent “visitation” of God when all the forces of evil were going to be destroyed forever. The end time scenarios are outlined in many documents and include, with various variations, notions of the rise of a royal messiah (“the Prince of the Congregation”) who is often accompanied by a priestly messiah (cf. the common expression “the messiahs of Aaron and Israel”), the coming of an ideal prophet,⁴¹ the restoration of Israel, and a new temple with a legitimate temple cult. Several documents also envisage a final battle between the forces of good and evil leading up to the new Era,⁴² and some in particular expect the warring angels to be pivotal in bringing about the messianic Era. One Hodayah refers to these angelic fighters by these words: “the war of the heroes of heaven shall spread over the world and shall not return until an annihilation that has been determined from eternity is completed” (1QH^a 11:35-36). Also the Sabbath Songs refer to the crucial role of the angels as warriors at the end time war (4Q402 1, 4) and also employ military terminology for the organization of angels, such as camp (מָחַנֵּת).⁴³ 11QMelchizedek presents Melchizedek as the leader of the angelic forces at the end time war, as we saw above, who will “carry out the vengeance of God’s judgments” (11Q13 2:13). It is however the War Scroll, 1QM, that focuses extensively on the final war between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. In terminology reminiscent of the discourse on the two spirits in 1QS 3-4, the document describes how each camp is being aided by heavenly hosts and Belial’s forces respectively.⁴⁴ 1QM 1:9-11 reads,

On the day when the Kittim fall there shall be of battle and horrible carnage before the God of Israel, for it is a day appointed by Him from ancient

40 See e.g., CD 4:12-5:15, 1QS 2:19; 4:19; 1QM 14:9-10.

41 Expectation of two messiahs are found in e.g., 1QS 9:11; CD 20:1; 1QSa 2:11-22; references to an end time prophet appear in e.g., 1QS 9:11-12 (“a prophet”); 4QFlorilegium (4Q174) 1:11-12 (“the Interpreter of the Law” will appear together with the Davidic messiah); CD 6:10-11 (“one who teaches righteousness in the end of days”). 4QTestimonia (4Q175) provides the scriptural basis for the coming of two messiahs and the prophet. There are differences between the documents, and one should not necessarily attempt to conflate the variations.

42 A *pesher* on Isaiah alludes to a final war against the Gentiles (4QpIs^a [4Q161]).

43 Intriguingly, as Newsom, Songs (1985) 29, observes, the common military term for angels נְשָׁבָע (host) is not used.

44 There are many fragmentary manuscripts of war texts (4Q471; 4Q491-497; 4Q285; 11Q14) that can be divided into copies of a similar recension as 1QM; copies of different recensions; and copies of an independent work (4Q285; 11Q14); see Duhaim, War Texts 12-43. In contrast to 1QM, 4Q285 4 elaborates on the role of the Davidic messiah. The relation of the Self-Glorification Hymn to the War Scroll remains an elusive issue.

times as a battle of annihilation for the Sons of Darkness. On that day the congregation of the gods and the congregation of men shall engage one another, resulting in great carnage. The Sons of Light and the forces of Darkness shall fight together to show the strength of God with the roar of a great multitude and the shout of gods and men; a day of disaster.

This strict dualistic ideology divides both the human and the supernatural realms into two opposing camps of good and evil, light and darkness, leaving no grey zone in between. While Michael (1QM 17:6-7) is hailed as the chief angel, the priests direct the army of the Sons of Light on the human level. The text mentions a messiah figure, the "Prince of the whole Congregation" (5:1), but his role is never explained. Whereas the opponents are identified as traditional enemies like Edom and Moab together with the Kittim (1:1-2), or simply "the nations" (12:11; 15:2 "nations of wickedness"), the expression Sons of Darkness emphasizes, rather, the mythical, eschatological nature of the enemies. They belong in the camp of Belial together with the army of his spirits. The boundaries between the angelic and human forces are blurry at times as they are grouped together into opposing camps, under all encompassing headings such as "the hordes of Belial" (11:8) "the lot of darkness" (13:5), "the army of Belial" (1:13), and the corresponding "lot of God" (13:5; 17: 7-8), or "lot of light" (13:9), and "our congregation" (12:8-9). Furthermore, the closeness and common nature of the human and angelic participants is underscored in attributes common for both parties: both humans and angels are "the elect" (10:9; 12:1, 5); both are called "holy ones," and 1:8-9 presents humans with typical angelic attributes: "then [the Sons of Rig]hteousness shall shine to all ends of the world, continuing to shine forth until the end of the appointed seasons of darkness" (cf. that partly preserved line 16: "the holy ones shall shine," which may refer to either humans or angels). At the same time, the different status of angels and humans is also highlighted, such as in the demand that only ritually pure and unblemished persons participate in the battle, with the explanation "for holy angels are present with their army" (7:3-6).⁴⁵ Though the heavenly and earthly forces fight side-by-side, in the postwar victory there is still a clear distinction between the heavenly and the earthly realms when God will "exalt the authority of Michael among the gods and the dominion of Israel among all flesh" (17:5-8). The War Scroll in part resembles Greco-Roman military manuals, but its utopian character is obvious in the participation of angels, the ongoing, uninterrupted temple service, and

45 It should be recognized that the War Scroll is a composite document with four main parts that have different perspectives: cols 1; 2-9; 10-14; and 15-19. See Collins, *Imagination* 167; Duhami, *Texts* 45-61.

the strict predetermined timeline in which the war is divided into seven parts over a period of 40 years, during which time even the enemies observe sabbatical years. Thus, ultimately God is in charge of the entire war (12:7ff) and also delivers the final blow against the enemy (cols 18-19). The fall of the evil lot completes the predestined, limited period in history in which humanity and cosmic powers have been divided into two camps of good and evil according to God's decree.

2.5. Additional Roles of Angels

As agents of God, angels are known from biblical tradition to deliver punishments (Genesis 19; Num 22:32-33; 2Samuel 24; Ps 35:5-6; Ezekiel 9; Dan 4:13-26). Angels comprise punishing forces in the War Scroll, where their military role is accented. Other Qumran texts present the angels as executing judgment in a more general sense. In 1QS 4:12 angels appear as instrumental in the punishment of the wicked at the end time, as it states “the visitation of all those who walk in it [the Spirit of Deceit] (will be) many afflictions by the angels of punishment, eternal perdition by the fury of God's vengeful wrath, everlasting terror and endless shame.”⁴⁶ The Damascus Document ascribes destructive powers to angels (CD 2:5b-7a):

Long forbearance (is) with him [God] and manifold forgiveness, so as to atone for those who repent (of) rebellious sin. But (with him too are) might, power, and great wrath with fiery flames in the hand of all the angels of destruction for those who willfully depart from the Way and despise the statute, leaving them neither remnant nor survivors.⁴⁷

The Sabbath Songs also refer to angels who execute judgment; the highlighting of these angels may indicate that parallel to the Israelites, not all angels were believed to be priests. 4Q400 1 i 14-16 reads “they do not tolerate any whose way is perverted]... And He purifies the pure ones [of light in order that they may requite] all whose way is perverted. But they propitiate His good will for all who repent of sin.”⁴⁸ Parallel to the CD passage, angels here take on a dual function of atoning for the repentant and punishing the wicked.

Angels in the contemporary Jewish literature commonly function as mediators of specific revelations in their role of heavenly guides and interpreters of dreams or visions as in 1En and Daniel. Two likely non-

⁴⁶ Translation by Charlesworth / Qimron, Rule.

⁴⁷ Translation from Baumgarten / Schwartz, Damascus.

⁴⁸ Translation from Newsom, Songs (1985) 93. She also notes the similarities between CD and 4Q400.

sectarian compositions entail revelations through angels: 4QVision of Amram (e.g., 4Q543 5-9; 4Q544 2; 4Q547 9) encompasses conversations between angels and humans; and the visionary work, the New Jerusalem text, which is preserved in seven copies, describes a guided tour of the future Jerusalem by an angel. Though the Qumranites may have revered such accounts, there is sparse evidence of this conventional function of angels in the literature they wrote themselves.⁴⁹ This may be due in part to the fact that the sect produced no apocalypses, a genre in which angels specifically perform this function, though this motif is attested in nonapocalyptic texts (Jub 1:27-29; Test Reu 5:3; Test Levi 9:6). Also, many documents assume that the sectarians had access to divine knowledge without the aid of angels through a more direct means of revelation from God.⁵⁰ The speaker in the Teacher Hymns in the Hodayot frequently thanks God for providing him with knowledge and insight: e.g., "I know through Your understanding" (e.g., 1QH^a 6:12; 7:12); "You display Your might through me, and reveal Yourself to me in Your strength as perfect light" (1QH^a 12:23). Similarly, in 1QS 11:5-7 the hymnist boasts: "My eyes have gazed on that which is eternal, on wisdom concealed from man, on knowledge and wise design (hidden) from the sons of men."⁵¹ At the same time, many documents including the Sabbath Songs and Hodayot emphasize the superior knowledge of the angels, such as in the frequent expression "angels of knowledge" and "those who establish knowledge."⁵² There are also references to the teaching of angels, e.g., "from their mouths (come) teachings concerning all matters of holiness" (4Q400 1 i 17). Presumably, then, divine knowledge is available not only through revelation by God (through Torah and other means), but also by close association with the angels. The image is not that of an angel visiting an elect human to disclose secrets; rather through communion with the angels, the

49 Collins, *Imagination* 151.

50 For example, the *pesharim* are based on divine inspired revelation, but no angels appear as mediators. Collins, *Imagination* 151 observes that the Teacher of Righteousness, as the official mediator of divine knowledge, did not need the assistance of angels (1QpHab 7:3-5); see also Collins, *Throne* 53. CD 6:2 recounts how God has raised up wise man from Israel who are guided by the "interpreter of the Torah" to search the Torah. Cf. the unmediated revelation from God to a past generation (CD 3:12-13) and to the Sons of Zadok (1QS 5:8-9).

51 Translation by Vermes, *Dead Sea* 115. Cf. the phrases in the Songs of the Sage: "His knowledge he (God) put [in my] hear[t]" (4Q511 48-49+51 ii 1); "You [pl]aced knowledge in my frame of dust that I might p[raise You]" (4Q511 28-29 3).

52 See also: "in the chiefs of praise-offering are tongues of knowledge" (4Q405 23 ii 12) and "they declare His regal Majesty according to their knowledge" (4Q400 2 3); cf 1QH^a 11: 21-23. According to Newsom, *Songs* (1985) 30, knowledge is the most prominent quality of angels in the Sabbath Songs.

sectarians are able to partake of this divine knowledge. The revelation through angels is thus subtle and indirect. In addition, passages from 1QS and 1QM hint at sectarians receiving knowledge through angels, giving the impression that such revelations may belong either to the present or the future. 1QS 4:22 locates wisdom in heaven, referring to angelic wisdom, “the wisdom of the sons of heaven,” but in this context full insight into the divine mystery may lie in the future. In contrast, the visionary in the concluding hymn has gained full insight into divine mysteries, which is related to his community’s association with the angels (1QS 11:5-9; see below). According to the War Scroll, the sharing of knowledge with the angels belongs to the eschaton (1QM 17:8). Nonetheless, in a hymn that appears unrelated to the theme of war (1QM 10:8b-16), the insights that come from seeing and listening to the angels are juxtaposed with learning the statutes (from Torah), thereby giving the impression that it concerns present reality (10:8b-11):

You have chosen for Yourself from all the peoples of the lands; the people of the saints of the covenant, learned in the statutes, enlightened in under[standing] those who hear the glorious voice and see the holy angels, whose ears are open; hearing deep things.

Living at the dawn of the eschaton, the sectarians were intently aware of the destructive and deceiving abilities of Belial and his spirits and therefore developed strategies to protect themselves, which included the help of good angels. An important role of the Angel of Truth in the discourse on the two spirits is to protect the sons of light against the evil spirits who are trying to cause them to stumble (1QS 3:24-25).⁵³ The sectarian text, the Songs of the Maskil (4Q510 and 4Q511), contains magical incantations to be recited as protection from evil spirits.⁵⁴ Reminiscent of the Sabbath Songs, the introductions refer to the Maskil (e.g., “For the instructor: the second [so]ng”), and the songs praise God, highlighting his majesty and power. But their specific purpose is apparent in lines such as these (4Q510 1 4-6):

And as for me, I am a sage who makes known the splendor of his beauty, in order to frighten and terrify all the spirits of the angels of destruction (*רוּחִי מְלָאכִי חֶבְלִי*) and the bastard spirits (*וּרְוחֹות מְזֻרִים*), demons (*שְׁדִים*), Lilith, howlers, and satyrs... and those who strike unexpectedly to lead the spirit of understanding astray, and to appall their hearts and their souls⁵⁵

These songs use words about God’s majesty as a magical power; thus, the hymn itself is magically powerful.⁵⁶ The nearness of the angels of-

53 Cf. protecting role of angels in Gen 24:7; Tobit.

54 See Nitzan, Hymns.

55 Translation by Newsom, Sage 381.

fers protection as well:⁵⁷ “God has made me [dwell] in the shelter of the Almighty... [in the shadow of his ha]nds he has hidden me... [He has concealed me among his holy ones... [in unison with his holy ones... [giving th]anks [to] God (4Q511 8 6-9).”⁵⁸ Highlighting the references to angels, Alexander states: “Basically the Maskil warns the demons not to meddle with him and his community, because they have got ‘protection’.”⁵⁹ Similarly the exorcistic psalms, 11QApPs^a invoke God to send his angels to fight against the demons; thus 11Q11 4:4-6 reads “YHWH will strike you with a [great] b[low] to destroy you [] And in his fury [he will send] against you a powerful angel [to carry out] his [entire command, who [will not show] you mercy.” The angels are invoked to guard the listeners from being attacked by disease and disaster (11Q11 6:10-11).

Angels are commonly associated with natural phenomenon as they control the movement of the heavenly bodies and the natural forces, i.e., winds, rains, lightning etc. (e.g., Jub 2:2; 1En 60:16-22). They were created on the first day according to Jubilees and assigned their tasks related to their command over various natural forces, but they do not assist God in the creation. Similarly, in the pre-sectarian Hymn to the Creator (11QPs^a) the angels witness the creation and praise God, but their control over nature remains unknown in this fragmentary text.⁶⁰ 1QH^a 1:10-21 and 1QM 10:11-12, however, share the idea with Jubilees that the angels are in charge of natural phenomena, to which Berakoth also attest. In 4Q286 3 a-d angels are in charge of rain, clouds and lightning.

Elaborations on the myth of the fallen angels from Genesis 6 in Second Temple Judaism were well known at Qumran, whose library included the Book of the Watchers (1En 1-36) and Jubilees.⁶¹ Moreover, the non-sectarian Genesis Apocryphon from Cave 1 contains the tradition about how Noah’s father Lamech suspected his wife of conceiving Noah by a fallen angel (1QapGen col 1). Elaborating on this myth, the Book of the Watchers provides an explanation for the origin of sin in the world. There is little interest in this etiology for sin in the Scrolls in which sin was part of the original design by God, as exemplified in the

56 Nitzan, Hymns 54-63.

57 Nitzan, Qumran 271.

58 Translation by Nitzan, Qumran 270.

59 Alexander, Wrestling 323.

60 For a comparison between the association of angels with natural phenomena in Jubilees, 11QPs^a, and Dan 3:52-90 LXX, plus other material, see Sollamo, Creation.

61 On this myth, see Jubilees 5, 10.

discourse on the two spirits (1QS 3:17-18; cf. 1QM 14:10-11).⁶² There are, however, hints of a tradition that shares the perspective of the sinful nature of some angels with 1 Enoch, in that angels will be judged according to their sins (1QH^a 10:32-33; 18: 34-35).⁶³

3. Fellowship with Angels

As we have seen, many texts assume that the gap between the divine and human spheres can be bridged and that humans can enter into communion with angels. Although the Sabbath Songs are unique by providing the actual liturgy for expressing angelic and human praise in unison, there are many passages that point to a closeness between human and angelic realms as a present reality.⁶⁴ The concluding hymn in 1QS asserts that the angelic and human communities are united (1QS 11:7-9):

God has given them [secret knowledge] to His chosen ones as an everlasting possession, and has caused them to inherit the lot of the Holy Ones. He has joined their assembly to the Sons of Heaven to be a Council of the Community, a foundation of the Building of Holiness, and eternal Plantation throughout all ages to come.⁶⁵

Similarly, the speaker in 1QH^a 11:21-23 expresses the belief in humans' ability to enter the angelic realm:

The perverse spirit You have cleansed from great transgression, that he might take his stand with the host of the holy ones, and enter together with the congregation of the sons of heaven. And for man, You have allotted an eternal destiny with the spirits of knowledge, to praise Your name together with shouts of joy, and to recount Your wonders before all Your creature.

It is important to note that many of the passages that assert a communion between the community and angels appear in hymns. This circumstance indicates that it was particularly during worship that sectarians would experience the presence of angels in a "liturgical communion with angels."⁶⁶ Like the Sabbath Songs, these passages may well be grounded in actual mystical experiences. Beliefs in communion with angels are intertwined with the fervent apocalyptic outlook of the sect;

62 See Davidson, *Angels* 288-324.

63 On the judgment against angels, see Mach, *Angels* 27.

64 For the distinction between the Sabbath Songs and other forms of poetry that reflect such unity with angels, see Nitzan, *Qumran* 292.

65 Translation by Vermes, *Dead Sea* 115.

66 Frennesson, *Rejoicing* 37-41. Frennesson provides a thorough analysis of all the liturgical Qumran texts related to angels; see also Davidson, *Angels* 278.

thus, through joining angels in worship the sectarians had already begun to benefit from the eschatological rewards of the future when the righteous would join the angelic domain forever (1QM 17:7-8; 1QS 11:7-8). 11QSefer ha-Milhama, dwells on the paradise conditions that will prevail at that time, emphasizing the unity between humans and angels (11Q14 1 ii 11-15):

And none will miscarry in your land, and none will be sick, no blights and mildew will be seen in its grain; [and there will be no stroke or stum]bling at all in your congregation, and wild animals will be absent from [the land; and there will be no plague] in your land, for God is with you and [his holy] angels [ar]e [standing] in your congregation and his holy name is invoked over you.

The Songs of the Sage state that the worthy will be purified and serve God in his celestial temple as angels, suggesting that they will be transformed into angels (4Q511 35 2-4): “God will sanctify some of those refined sevenfold and some of the holy ones for Himself for an eternal sanctuary. And (there shall) be purity amongst the cleansed. And they shall be priests, His righteous people, His host, and servants, angels of His glory.”⁶⁷ Similarly, 1QSb 4:25-26 (see above) elevates the high priest to the ranks of angels.

One text, appropriately entitled the Self-Glorification Hymn, stands out by the exalted claims of the speaker that go beyond what we find elsewhere. The hymn is extant in copies that belong to the Hodayot⁶⁸ and one manuscript (4Q491) originally identified as part of the War Scroll.⁶⁹ While comparing himself to angels, the speaker also claims superiority to them; in contrast to the angels who never sit (4Q405 20 ii 21-22 2), this speaker gets to sit on a throne like God. The following excerpt is from 4Q491 (11 i 12-16):

Ja mighty throne in the congregation of the gods. None of the ancient kings shall sit on it, and their nobles [shall] not [] There are no[n]e comparable [to me in] my glory, no one (shall be exalted) besides me; none shall associate with me. For I dwelt in the [] in the heavens, and there is no one[] I am reckoned with the gods and my abode is in the holy congregation [My] desi[re] is not according to the flesh, and everything precious to me is in the glory [of] the holy [habit]ation. [Wh]om have I considered contempti-

67 Translation loosely based Fletcher-Louis, Glory 162-163. There are different opinions about the nature of the holy ones. Whilst Fletcher-Louis identifies them as humans, Davila argues that they are angels whereas those purified are humans. Fletcher-Louis points out that God sanctifying angels is an odd idea. See Fletcher-Louis, Glory 162-166; Davila, Ascents 478-479. Cf. 1QH 11:22; 14:14; 2 i 10-14.

68 For a description of the manuscripts, see Duhaim, Texts 35-40; Abegg, Heaven.

69 Collins, Throne 53.

ble? Who is comparable to me in my glory? Who of those who sail the seas shall return telling [of] my [equal]?

The identification of the speaker (who should not necessarily be equated with the author) is complicated by the uncertainty of the relationship between the manuscripts and the connection to the War Scroll. The official editor, Maurice Baillet, proposed that Michael was the speaker, but Morton Smith argued that the hymn concern the Teacher of Righteousness, who in this case is presented as deified.⁷⁰ The claim of being superior to the kings certainly points to a human being; similarly, the comparison with a sailor who comes back evokes the image of a human being who ascends into the heavens and returns rather than that of an angel.⁷¹

There is a debate as to the degree of union between angels and humans these kinds of passages envisage. C. Fletcher-Louis argues that these texts together with the Sabbath Songs reflect the belief in angelomorphism, the transformation of human beings into angels, which the Qumran community saw as a present reality.⁷² Thus Fletcher-Louis, exclaims "They take for granted a cultic mythology which means that those who enter the worship of the community experience a transfer from earth to heaven, from humanity to divinity and from mortality to immortality."⁷³ His theory has been accepted by Allan Segal amongst others.⁷⁴ The debate is tied in with the general question about the character of the eschatological vision of the sect as future or realized. It is clear, however, that with the plausible exception of the last hymn, these documents overall maintain a clear distinction between the human and the divine spheres: they express a tension between belonging to the human race and as such sharing its sinful nature, and partaking in the perfect heavenly world in communion with angels. Such tension may not have been expected to be resolved until the eschaton, when full union with the angels would be possible.⁷⁵

70 Collins suggests that the text concerns a leader of the sect; Collins, Throne 54-55.

71 Smith, Ascent.

72 Related to this view is the belief that a few, elect persons, i.e., Moses (evident in 4Q377 1 recto ii) and the high priest (1QSb 4:24-8) have actually been elevated to the same status as angels; see Fletcher-Louis, Reflections 292-312.

73 Fletcher-Louis, Glory 476.

74 Segal, Life 303-308. See also the sophisticated discussion by Elior, Temples 165-198.

75 Thus 1QH^a 11:23-25 continues (11:21-23 is quoted above), "But I, a creature of clay, what am I? Kneaded with water, for whom am I to be reckoned, and what is my strength? For I have taken my stand within the domain of wickedness, and I am with the wretched by lot." Nitzan, Qumran 275, points out the distinction between the human and angelic realm concerning Hodayot and the Songs of the Sage. Newsom, Priests 117, makes the same general observation with regards to the Sabbath Songs.

In addition to poetic texts that may reflect on the mystical experiences of joining the heavenly host, three of the rules texts, CD, the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa), and War Scroll, refer to the angelic presence as a reason for excluding the ritually impure and other imperfect members from participating in the assembly and in the war camp.⁷⁶ In these cases, the presence of the angels in the community is presented as a matter of fact. The three documents list various defects, with an emphasis on physical defects, and refer to the presence of angels in similar terminology, “because holy angels (כִּי מֶלֶאכִי הַקּוֹדֵשׁ) are in their midst” (4Q266 8 i 9). Although these laws are clearly inspired by the list of physical defects that render priests ineligible for service in the temple (Lev 21:17–23), they may also express a fear of demons. Since physical ailments were generally believed to be caused by demons and evil spirits, by excluding those possibly possessed these laws ensured that no evil spirits would enter into the meetings (CD, 1QSa) or into the war camp.⁷⁷ These laws, then, are further indications of the reality of the angelic-human communion that Qumran literature expresses. They also evince the extent to which the sectarians divided the world into two camps of good and evil, which encompassed both the earthly and supernatural realms and where the boundaries between the terrestrial and the supernatural remained blurry. Devorah Dimant describes this dualistic worldview very well: “Seeing themselves as part of the hosts of Lights, the Qumranites viewed all their political conflicts and theological controversies in terms of this metaphysical struggle.” She argues that the Qumranites “conceived their own existence as analogical to that of angels.”⁷⁸ Accordingly, in order to worship together with the angels, officiating in the heavenly temple, the sectarians had to imitate the angels in purity and perfection, which is evident in the extensive purity regulations of the sect and the call for perfection. Examining a broad range of literature from Qumran, Dimant provides a list of characteristics that angels and community members share that point to such imitation of angels, including “forming a special community,” “existing in perfect purity,” having no “sin in their midst,” and “possessing divine wisdom.”⁷⁹ Conversely, the opposite characteristics belong to the other camp, i.e., impurity, transgressions, and ignorance. Collins, similarly, traces the alleged celibacy of (some)

76 CD 15:15–17/4Q266 8 i 6–9; 1QSa 2:3–9; 1QM 7:3–6.

77 See Wassen, Angels.

78 Dimant, Men 96.

79 Dimant, Men 93–103.

sectarians to their aspirations of an angelic life.⁸⁰ In this context we should also remember the parallel terminology for the angelic and sectarian communities, such as “congregation” (עֲדָה), “council” (סְבִבָּה), “lot” (גּוֹרָל), “holy ones” (קָדוֹשִׁים), and princes (שָׂרִים) (CD 6:6).⁸¹

Conclusion

The ideas connected with angels in the Scrolls are firmly rooted in Judaism of the Second Temple period, which saw expanded reflections and speculations about angels.

This development is often understood as a way to bridge the distance between an increasingly transcendent God and his humanity. Thereby the angels act on behalf of God as agents in his doings with humanity. We find angels in the Scrolls doing God's work by maintaining the cosmos and executing judgment. But we do not find strong evidence of angels as mediators of revelations in the sectarian literature, at least not in a direct role as heavenly guides or interpreters of dreams and visions. Instead, the sectarians may have benefited from divine knowledge in an indirect way, by communion with angels. This circumstance challenges us to rethink the reasons for the increasing stress on angels in the literature and also the presupposition that God was a distant God. The scrolls at Qumran testify to a rather optimistic view on the humans' ability to reach the divine sphere in a direct way, and, conversely, also to a belief in God's direct, unmediated revelation to humans.⁸² Rather than mediators the angels appear as heavenly beings that humans can join to transcend the human sphere and come close to God, particularly through joining the angels in their service in the heavenly temple, even into the innermost sanctuary.

The angelology in the sectarian literature in Scrolls is tied to an intense apocalyptic worldview that included a sharp dualism and the expectation of God's imminent intervention when he would unleash his angelic forces against all evil. The close encounter between humans and angels, often expressed in joint worship, reflects an apocalyptic climate

⁸⁰ Collins, Powers 24; also Fletcher-Louis, Glory 133. Although Josephus, Philo, and Pliny the Elder claim that the Essenes were celibate (with the exception of one branch that married according to Josephus), there is no clear evidence for this practice in the Scrolls; see Wassen, Women 5-9. Harrington notes that the community's aspiration of living an angelic life is reflected in the wisdom text, 4QSapiential Work A (4Q416- 4Q418); Wisdom at Qumran 57-8.

⁸¹ See Newsom, Songs (1985) 29; García Martínez, Sonship 116.

⁸² On this point, see Himmelfarb, Ascent 69-71.

in which the heavenly and terrestrial worlds were close together. Whether or not the sectarian eschatological ideology should be defined as realized or future, the sectarians clearly saw themselves as profiting from eschatological benefits and experiencing God's presence in a tangible way, through union with angels, a union that according to some documents would last forever.

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